

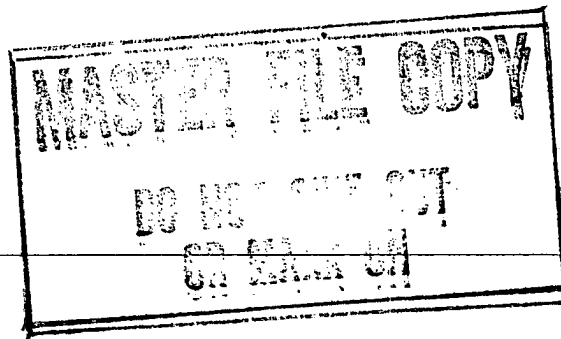


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Angola: A Divided Leadership



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An Intelligence Assessment

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ALA 84-10005
January 1984

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Angola: A Divided Leadership

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An Intelligence Assessment

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This paper was prepared by [] Central
Africa Branch, Africa Division, Office of African and
Latin American Analysis. It was coordinated with
the Directorate of Operations. []

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Angola:
A Divided Leadership

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 31 December 1983
was used in this report.*

The political balance within Angola's ruling, Marxist-oriented party is delicate and tense. Worsening ideological and ethnic factionalism is a major source of friction within the regime and has led to polarization at the top that has immobilized most decisionmaking. The leadership recently appears to be collectively committed to an increased military effort—aided by expanded Soviet and Cuban assistance—to roll back Jonas Savimbi's UNITA (National Union for Total Independence of Angola) insurgents. Otherwise, however, the deep divisions within the regime have rendered it unable to deal with deteriorating economic, social, and military conditions or to respond to negotiating opportunities in the international arena that could offer ways of altering these adverse domestic trends.

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President dos Santos, a black who was a compromise choice after Angola's first President died in 1979, has been attempting to strengthen his position by replacing many rivals in the government and the ruling party with his own men. He still faces, however, strong opposition from a Soviet- and Cuban-backed, mulatto-led hardline faction that dominates the decision-making process. This faction has successfully held the line against both the acceptance of a Cuban troop reduction as part of a Namibian settlement package and the exploration of a political accommodation with Jonas Savimbi.

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The other major group, a black nationalist faction, in the past has demonstrated some flexibility on the issues of Cuban withdrawal and UNITA and has been otherwise seemingly in agreement with dos Santos's relatively moderate policy preferences. The black nationalists, however, have been alienated from dos Santos, in part because he has been unable to fulfill their expectations for economic and social development and a greater role in decisionmaking.

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Although both factions appear to have lost some power and influence to the President, we do not believe that dos Santos has been able to amass sufficient authority or support to turn policy on key security issues in directions favorable to the United States, as we believe he would prefer to do. Rather, we believe that in trying to attain a centrist consensus divorced from the ideological and racial fray, dos Santos may have created a three-way standoff in which he, while supported by some individual MPLA leaders, is not solidly backed by either major faction.

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We do not expect an early resolution to the crisis of leadership in Luanda. Factional infighting is likely to continue and may intensify, but we expect the hardliners to retain the upper hand for at least the near term. They hold the upper hand in political experience and sophistication, and, with the help of their Soviet and Cuban backers, are likely to fight bitterly—and successfully—to block policies that would cut against their interests. Nonetheless, the black majority Angolan populace is more on the side of the black nationalists, and we expect this group to make a comeback in the longer term, provided they start to work more effectively to enhance their support at the grass-roots level in the party, the military, and the populace at large.

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We believe that as long as dos Santos continues to move cautiously he probably can survive. His hardline opponents in the regime probably will allow him to continue talks with the United States and with South Africa because they believe these efforts at least buy time for the government. They also may believe that the United States might offer diplomatic recognition or economic aid, or that international pressure might eventually force Washington to drop its insistence on linking independence for Namibia to Cuban withdrawal from Angola. Nonetheless, we do not believe that the President can decisively change policy directions in the near term.

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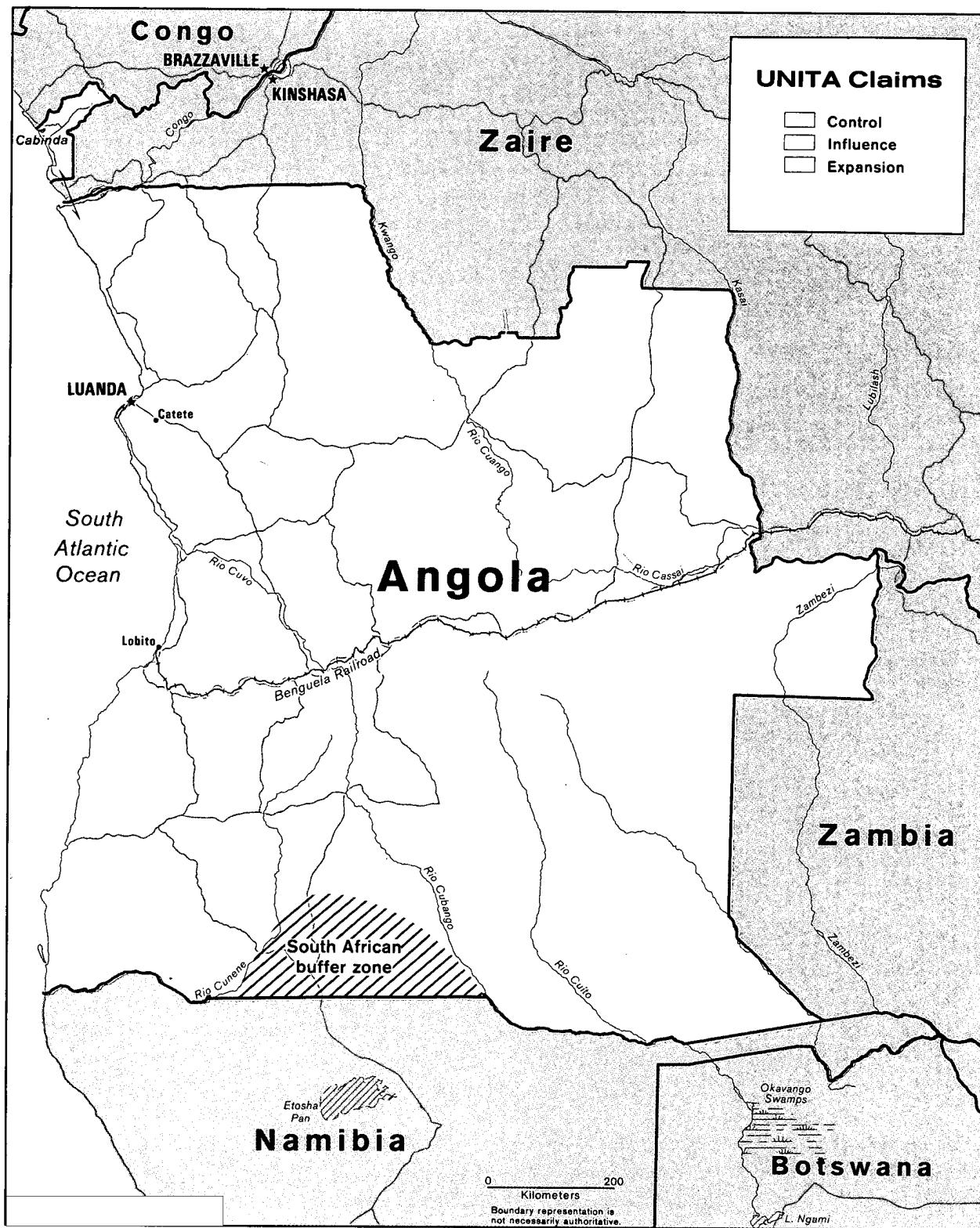
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Angola: A Divided Leadership

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Introduction

[redacted] the political balance within the ruling, Marxist-oriented Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) is delicate and tense. President dos Santos has undertaken some restructuring and shifting of power over the past two years in an effort to consolidate his power, but we believe that ideological and ethnic factionalism, along with the personal enmity between dos Santos and other key leaders, has worsened and has immobilized the decisionmaking process.¹ [redacted]

This paper analyzes the divisions within the leadership of Angola by examining the two principal factions—the mulatto-led, pro-Soviet, ideological hardliners and the more moderate, pragmatic black nationalists. It describes the key personalities involved and the stands each faction has taken on issues important to the United States. The paper also assesses dos Santos's performance, discusses the prospects for his continuation in power, and speculates on possible outcomes to the factional strife in Luanda.

The Political Setting

Neto's Legacy

President Agostinho Neto, who died in September 1979, had begun to move Angolan policy in a more moderate direction after the early years of postrevolutionary enthusiasm.² Although Neto frequently declared his allegiance to Marxism-Leninism, he acted more like a pragmatic socialist, and [redacted] he had plans for far-reaching, albeit gradual, moderating changes in foreign and domestic policy. He appeared to us to want to develop a closer relationship with the West and was purging the party and government of those who disagreed openly with him. His goals, [redacted] included reorganizing the government

at the national and provincial levels in order to meet black demands for more power relative to the mulatto elite, securing the country's northern and southern frontiers by making accommodations with Angola's neighbors, and taking a more earnest look at the possibility of a peaceful resolution to the UNITA (National Union for Total Independence of Angola) insurgency, then largely confined to the southern part of the country. In retrospect, Neto also appeared to have been attempting to create a more genuine policy of nonalignment that eventually may have included the withdrawal of Cuban troops. [redacted]

Some MPLA leaders, according to reporting from several open sources, became concerned that Neto's desire to deradicalize the regime and seek an accommodation with the West was a betrayal of the Angolan revolution. Nonetheless, because of Neto's stature in Angola these leaders posed little overt opposition to his actions within the ruling group—an uneasy coalition divided then, as now, along racial lines between mulattoes and blacks and along closely corresponding ideological lines between pro-Soviet ideologues and pragmatic nationalists. [redacted]

An added complication to assessing where the two major factions—and key individuals within them—stand on issues important to the United States is that policy views in Luanda frequently do not break down neatly along factional lines. The factions themselves sometimes appear to be divided over important questions, particularly economic planning and military strategy. Nevertheless, we believe that the information available to us provides a reasonably accurate picture of the broad outlines of the political pulling and hauling and the effects it has had on policy decisions as well as on political fortunes of key individuals in the leadership.

² Neto died in the Soviet Union while undergoing medical treatment for alcohol-related, internal disorders. [redacted]

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The MPLA

The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola was founded in 1956 out of a coalition of several anti-Portuguese groups. It assumed power in 1975 after emerging victorious from the civil war that attended the Portuguese withdrawal from Angola, and it has remained an elite "vanguard" party. Blacks make up the bulk of the party's 30,000 members. The country's first President, Agostinho Neto, was a black—as is dos Santos. But mulattoes, who make up less than 2 percent of Angola's population, have dominated the party's hierarchy since its founding. As a result of the privileged status they enjoyed under Portuguese rule, the mulattoes tend to be better educated and more skilled than black Angolans, and they occupy a greatly disproportionate share of the key positions in the society. [redacted]

The party's 64-member central committee is unwieldy, and real power, at least within the party, appears to be centered in the 14-man political bureau. Major personnel changes and the direction of party policy generally are rubberstamped by periodic party congresses. [redacted]

Popular support for the MPLA has been governed largely by ethnic and geographic factors. The party's strongest following is in and around the capital and in other urban areas. Its rural influence is greatest in the region north of the Benguela Railroad and in the southwest. Its base of tribal support is primarily from the 1.7 million Kimbundu and the smaller tribes they dominate, together constituting approximately 30 percent of the population. The 150,000 to 200,000 mulattoes and the 10,000 to 30,000 whites still in Angola also generally support the MPLA, in large measure because the MPLA is an avowedly multiracial party. [redacted]

Dos Santos: Struggling for Authority

Reporting from a variety of open sources indicates that President dos Santos, formerly one of Neto's prime ministers and close associate, came to power in 1979 as a compromise candidate of the two major political groupings. Although dos Santos, a Soviet-educated engineer, was chosen for the Presidency by



Eduardo dos Santos, President

constitutional means, mulatto-led hardliners in the regime—along with the Soviets and Cubans—backed him because they believed he would be weak, malleable, and controllable. The other major faction, the black nationalists, accepted dos Santos because of his close identification with the relatively moderate policy course that Neto had begun to pursue before his death. [redacted]

Although he has ruled with the caution and indecisiveness of a compromise leader, dos Santos has gradually sought to establish himself as a power in his own right. Both in his consensus-building style of leadership and in his preference for relatively moderate policies, dos Santos appears to us to have tried to cast himself in the mold of Neto. He lacks the personal stature and authority that Neto had as the founder of the MPLA and the father of independent Angola. [redacted]

For approximately the past year and a half, dos Santos has tried to strengthen his position vis-a-vis the major party factions by undercutting the competing groups. Although we lack precise reporting on how dos Santos operates, he apparently has been able on occasion to use his dual position as head of the party

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How Decisions Are Made—or Not Made

Dos Santos, according to reporting from various open and diplomatic sources, discusses important policy matters with a small group of close advisers to whom he looks for counsel and support. In our view, the President's inner circle seems to be composed largely of technocrats who are not closely aligned with either major faction. These confidants probably include Minister of Interior Manuel "Kito" Rodrigues, Secretary of State for Cooperation and former foreign affairs adviser Carlos Fernandes, and Deputy Foreign Minister Venancio de Moura. []

Kito, a key moderate and a leading member of the political bureau, has for many years been one of Angola's principal negotiators on Namibia in contacts with the United States and South Africa. Kito is believed by many diplomatic observers to be particularly close to the President. Other members of the inner circle may include from time to time Vice Minister of Defense Antonio dos Santos Franca and political bureau member Robert de Almeida, an influential, moderate black. []

Dos Santos, in our view, however, cannot make major policy decisions without the approval of a larger and more diverse "ruling group" of perhaps 10 or 12 key party leaders drawn from both the party's central committee and political bureau as well as from the

Cabinet. This larger collection of key personalities is, we believe, Angola's top policymaking body. It includes some members of dos Santos's inner circle, other moderates and pragmatists—such as Defense Minister Pedro Maria Tonha and Minister of Planning Lopo do Nascimento, both black—as well as some of dos Santos's ideological and ethnic opponents. []
party Secretary Lucio Lara and former Defense Minister Iko Carreira are the most important hardline members of the decisionmaking group. []

Although we do not have direct evidence of the relationship between Moscow and Lara, []
[] Lara plays a key role in blocking dos Santos from implementing policy changes on issues of importance to the United States. Consequently, we believe that Soviet and Cuban desires probably are filtered into the ruling group through the hardliners led by Lara—as well as through Moscow's and Havana's direct dealings with dos Santos. Although the hardliners have suffered some setbacks over the past year or so, the recent hardening of the regime's position on fighting the insurgents and in its talks with the United States suggests that the hardliners still hold sway in the decisionmaking ruling group. []

and government to outmaneuver the factions bureaucratically. His powers of appointment have been particularly important in this regard. In some instances, he has also played off one faction against the other—for example, relying on hardliner support to expel some black nationalist leaders from the Cabinet. On other occasions, he has been able to act against factional opponents on the grounds of personal incompetence and corruption. []

At the same time that he has removed some members of the opposing factions, dos Santos appears to have placed his own men on the MPLA's control commission, a small group that among other functions monitors party discipline. We also see a decision of the

MPLA's central committee in December 1982 to grant dos Santos "special powers" to deal with the "national emergency" as part of his design to increase his influence at the expense of the factions. []

As the result of these moves by dos Santos, both factions appear to have lost some power and influence to the President. And yet, the government's continued inability to mount an effective counterinsurgency effort, to stem the economic decline, or to move decisively in its bilateral negotiations with the United States strongly suggests that dos Santos has not acquired the mass of authority necessary to make decisions that will stick on controversial issues. []

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The Factions' Stance on Key Issues

Leaders of both major factions—and the leadership in Luanda as a whole—probably are aware that the UNITA insurgency must be ended and some sort of settlement on Namibia must be reached before the government can turn its attention to the country's massive economic and social problems. The combination of the war with UNITA and South African military incursions into southern Angola has destroyed much of the economic infrastructure, disrupted agricultural production, and cut output from Angola's diamond mines. The government is saddled with hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons in the southern and central part of the country and is increasingly unable to pay its debts and support the rising defense burden—which includes cash payments for the Cuban combat force.^a []

There are stark differences, however, in the lengths we believe each faction is prepared to go to solve the key security problems:

- Reporting from a variety of diplomatic and open sources indicates that the **black nationalists**, until recently at least, were prepared to accept a substantial reduction in the Cuban presence as the price for a Namibia settlement. The nationalists have been willing to force the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) to be more flexible in negotiations over Namibia and have favored using the threat of a reduction in Angolan support to accomplish this. Many members of the black nationalist faction also have expressed a willingness to seek a political accommodation with Savimbi. In our judgment, however, the military momentum UNITA has generated in recent months probably has triggered concern among the black nationalists, who may now believe that a withdrawal of Cuban forces at this juncture would give Savimbi's forces

a sudden boost on the battlefield. For this reason and because the nationalists probably do not wish Luanda to appear to be knuckling under to the United States and South Africa, we believe they would favor a very gradual drawdown of Cuban troops but only when they conclude that Savimbi can be contained militarily and dealt with politically.

- **The hardliners**, who probably believe that a departure of Cuban troops would mean the end to mulatto domination of the MPLA, categorically reject a Cuban withdrawal as the price for a Namibia settlement and favor a military solution to the UNITA insurgency. Prominent hardliners have told Western diplomats that, if a Namibia settlement is reached, South Africa's departure from Namibia would end Pretoria's support to UNITA, which could then be defeated by government forces. Similarly, we believe that the mulatto-led hardliners oppose reconciliation with Savimbi because they are afraid that, if Savimbi were brought into the government, he would enter into an alliance with the black nationalists in the MPLA or—with his charisma and political skills—gain a dominant position in his own right. In either case this would spell the end of mulatto primacy in Luanda. []

With regard to other issues, both factions in Luanda probably are dissatisfied with Soviet Bloc economic aid. Reporting from various diplomatic sources also suggests that both the pro-Soviet hardliners and the black nationalists agree on the desirability of gaining US diplomatic recognition for Angola; both recognize that greater Western economic and technical assistance and investment are needed if Angola is to reverse its steep economic decline. The hardliners insist, however, that despite the worsening economic situation the withdrawal of Cuban troops is too heavy a price to pay for US recognition. []

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Rather, dos Santos, in trying to attain a centrist consensus divorced from the ideological and racial fray, probably has succeeded, in our judgment, in creating a three-way standoff in which he, while supported by some individual MPLA leaders, is not solidly backed by either major faction. Indeed, the factionalism in the leadership that has paralyzed decisionmaking in Luanda over the past year or so appears to us to flow as much from the alienation of both factions from dos Santos as it does from the increase in tensions between the factions themselves. Reporting from various diplomatic sources indicates that policy debates have grown increasingly bitter and rancorous over the past year and that there have been instances when senior officials from both opposing camps have criticized dos Santos openly at party meetings. []

Dos Santos's inability to gain a consensus on the major issues facing the regime has reinforced his image as a weak and indecisive leader. The imposition of martial law in parts of the country and other emergency measures have underscored the weakness of the MPLA regime rather than help undergird the President's position. His failure to follow through on an anticorruption campaign that threatened to implicate a number of senior officials in diamond-smuggling activities is another indication of dos Santos's relative weakness. []

The Factions

Virtually all of Angola's top leadership, including dos Santos, pay homage to the Neto legacy and describe current policies as the fulfillment of what Neto had in mind for Angola. Various press and diplomatic sources have described the black nationalist faction as composed of "revolutionary nationalists" who, although committed to Marxism, prefer political non-alignment and economic relations with the West. According to black nationalist leaders, the party and ideology should be made to serve the country and not the reverse, a situation they allege the hardliners have imposed on Angola. Moreover, they argue that the government's primary emphasis should be on economic and social development and that the militant foreign policy that Angola has been pursuing over the

past several years has not been in the country's best interests. By contrast, mulattoes in the MPLA have demonstrated themselves to be more radical than black party members. The narrowly based, mulatto-led group, in our judgment, has taken positions on most key issues that have been dogmatically Marxist, pro-Soviet, and protective of the group's factional interests. []

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The Black Nationalists: In Eclipse

The Catete Group—the faction's core cluster of strident black nationalists, so named because some of its members hail from the town of that name near Luanda—appeared to us to be in the ascendancy about two years ago, but have suffered several reverses over the past year. Members of the Catete Group and the loose collection of like-minded blacks that we believe are affiliated with them are still represented on the MPLA's central committee and its smaller and more influential political bureau. But reporting from various open and diplomatic sources suggests that their numbers have been reduced, and hardliners may have tightened their hold over these two governing bodies.³ []

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Some of the black nationalists' reverses have clearly come at the hands of the hardliners—who may have been aided in their intrigues by the application of pressure on dos Santos by Moscow and Havana—but we believe the President has moved against the nationalists as well, partially because he probably finds it easier to act against the nationalists than the more powerful hardliners. Nevertheless, despite the tensions that have resulted from the nationalists' losses of government and party positions and their disappointment with what they view as dos Santos's failure to fulfill their policy expectations, we believe the makings of a political alliance between the President and this faction still exist. In our view, dos Santos's policy

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³ Reporting on political developments in Angola is not sufficiently detailed to allow us to assign even rough numbers to the membership of either of the two main factions. In relative terms, however, the black nationalist faction probably is significantly larger than the hardline faction—in line with national population divisions—although its influence on decisionmaking is the lesser. []

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preferences generally accord with those of the nationalists, and he probably recognizes that the black nationalists are potentially supported by the majority of the numerically superior blacks within the MPLA, as well as by the urban and rural blacks and the black rank and file in the armed forces and in the People's Militia. So far, however, black leaders have been unable to mobilize this latent support. [redacted]

The black nationalists have been particularly weakened by dos Santos's ouster from the government in late 1982 of then Agriculture Minister Manuel Pacavira and, more recently, Minister of Health Mendes de Carvalho. Reporting from diplomatic sources revealed that de Carvalho had been outspokenly critical of dos Santos's indecisiveness and had been a strong advocate of rapprochement with UNITA. Like most black nationalists, both former officials also have been critical of the MPLA's dependence on mulattoes, whites, and foreigners. These same sources indicate that Pacavira and de Carvalho have some popular support among young blacks in Luanda's ghettos. [redacted]

We have not been able to identify the current leaders of the Catete Group and, in view of current trends in Luanda, the radical black nationalists may have to lay low temporarily and regroup. Some of the faction's former adherents, such as political bureau member Evaristo Domingos Kimba, apparently have been co-opted by the President. Others, like Vice Minister of Defense Joao Luis Neto, have been sent abroad by dos Santos for "training" or assigned to provincial posts in the interior. [redacted]

One potential bright spot for this faction has been the dramatic rise to a position of major influence over the past 18 months of Minister of Planning Lopo do Nascimento, now virtually an economic czar. We do not count Nascimento—a former prime minister and once widely viewed as being close to Havana—as a member of the Catete Group. He has been strengthening his black nationalist credentials, however, by elevating blacks to senior positions under him and may be building a power base. Last year, according to diplomatic sources, he removed Cuban advisers from several key ministries. Nascimento has become a close adviser to dos Santos, and, as some foreign diplomatic observers in Luanda view him as a potential rival to the President, he could provide the black nationalists with the effective leadership they have lacked. [redacted]



Lopo do Nascimento, Minister of Planning

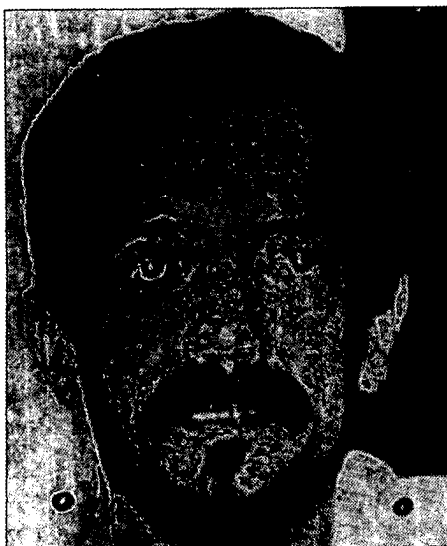
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The Hardliners: Still the Principal Arbiters

Although dos Santos has reduced somewhat the power of the Soviet- and Cuban-backed, mulatto-led hardliners in the MPLA over the past two years, we still believe that no major substantive decision can be made without their agreement.⁴ Moreover, we believe that dos Santos cannot overly antagonize the hardliners even on nonsubstantive matters without running the risk of a move against him by this faction, particularly since we believe the hardliners retain control of the military and intelligence services. For example, black nationalists attempted to undermine the hardliners in mid-1983 by ramming through the central committee a new nationality law that would adversely affect the mulattoes—and, by extension, the hardliners. Dos Santos, however, has not enacted the measure into law, probably fearing the hardliners' reaction. [redacted]

⁴ Moscow has some 1,500 civilian advisers and economic technicians in Angola, many of whom are attached to various government ministries and state industries. In addition, there are some 7,000 to 8,000 Cuban and East European civilian advisers. [redacted]

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Lucio Lara, MPLA party secretary

The hardliners have a number of crucial advantages. The faction is more cohesive and better disciplined and organized than its black nationalist rivals. It also has superior leadership; the key hardline leaders are seasoned political manipulators and infighters. Finally, and most important in our view, Moscow and Havana are ready, willing, and able to use on behalf of the hardline faction the leverage they have as the military underwriters of the regime. [REDACTED]



Lucio Lara, a doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist, a mulatto, and MPLA party secretary, probably is the most powerful of the pro-Soviet hardliners. He is also the party's chief theoretician and probably Angola's most skillful politician. Although diplomatic sources report that he has undefined health problems and his influence appears to have waned somewhat over the past year—for example, he is no longer appointed acting head of the party when dos Santos leaves the country—we believe Lara remains, along with dos Santos and Nascimento, one of Angola's top three leaders. [REDACTED]

Former Defense Minister Iko Carreira is also a leading hardliner. Reporting from various diplomatic

sources indicates that he may be less doctrinaire than Lara and has sometimes been described as an opportunist. Although a mulatto, Carreira is said to retain substantial support among black officers in the Angolan military. Since his return in 1982 from nearly three years' extended training in the Soviet Union, Carreira has been serving as an adviser to the President on defense matters and recently was appointed Chief of the Air Force. The former Defense Minister's reputation has been tarnished by widespread allegations that he is personally corrupt, and he appears to have lost his former prestige and authority. Nevertheless, his status as an associate of the late President Neto gives him considerable influence within the hardline faction. [REDACTED]

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Paulo Jorge has not figured prominently in the factional infighting, but the mulatto Foreign Minister is a member of the hardline group, according to several diplomatic sources. Black nationalists, the sources report, resent having a mulatto as Foreign Minister, and, over the past two years, there has been widespread speculation in Luanda's diplomatic community that the Foreign Minister's removal was imminent. Nevertheless, we believe that in recent months Jorge has been playing a more central role in Angolan foreign policy. His inflammatory rhetoric has often appeared at odds with the aims of the negotiations in which dos Santos has been involved. Although some Western diplomats argue that in private discussions Jorge is more reasonable and pragmatic on issues related to the Namibia negotiations, his public statements have been full of diatribe and highly critical of the United States. [REDACTED]

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Although we are able to identify from fragmentary reporting a few black hardliners in the regime, such as Ambrosio Lukoki and the secretary general of the Angolan workers union, Pascoal Luvualu, we do not know what roles they play in the factional strife. In an effort to weaken the hardliners, dos Santos dismissed Lukoki, who was believed to be close to Cuban President Castro, from the political bureau. [REDACTED]

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The Military in Politics

We believe that the Angolan military has the potential to play a greater political role than apparently is the case. Although we do not know the extent of involvement of Angola's military leaders in politics or their attitudes on major issues facing the regime, the military's influence in decisionmaking appears to have grown over the past two years. For example, the armed forces' representation on the political bureau and central committee has increased somewhat in recent years. A reliable diplomatic source has reported that dos Santos has become more dependent on the military since last year. The creation of military councils for the administration of central and southern Angola will further enhance the political influence of the armed forces. []

[] ideological and racial divisions in the armed forces may roughly parallel those in the political sphere. A few of the country's military leaders appear to be fairly close to dos Santos, according to diplomatic sources, but others may be under Iko Carreira's sway. The military's frustration over its own inability to effectively prosecute the war against UNITA may lead it to lose confidence in the regime and may lead some in the military to plan for a possible military takeover. In the past, Minister of Defense Pedro Maria Tonha has been mentioned by some diplomatic observers as a possible replacement for President dos Santos. Nevertheless, the military's dependence on Soviet and Cuban support makes it unlikely, in our view, that the military could act independently at this juncture. Moreover, we believe that the hardliners' control over the military probably has increased in recent months as the Soviets and Cubans have increased their military assistance in reaction to growing insurgent successes. []

Outlook and Implications for the United States

We do not expect an early resolution to the crisis of leadership in Luanda and doubt that the regime over the near term will undertake new policy departures that would be favorable to the United States and the West. We doubt that dos Santos will be able to bridge

the ideological and racial cleavages within the party to the degree necessary to develop a consensus in favor of the policies he—and the nationalists—favor. Nor do we expect that he will be able to amass sufficient authority to move unilaterally in pursuit of these policies. His attempts to date to exclude hardliners from his regime's dealings with the United States and South Africa and his increased reliance on his own team of negotiators have raised suspicions of him to a high degree among the hardliners as well as in Moscow and Havana. Likewise, dos Santos's effort to increase his authority through bureaucratic maneuverings could backfire. According to diplomatic sources, dos Santos's acquisition of special powers, first granted by the MPLA Central Committee in late 1982 and recently renewed, has already caused ministers to look to him for decisions, but he is unable or unwilling to make them lest he antagonize one faction or another. As a result, his indecisiveness and fundamental weakness have become more conspicuous. Dos Santos's failure to gain either aid or concessions—such as diplomatic recognition—during negotiations with the United States may have also worked against him. []

Decisionmaking on key issues is likely, in our view, to remain a collective process, and the final say will continue to come from the deeply divided ruling group of key leaders. The mood of the group will be determined by the state of play in the three-way pulling and hauling between the two factions and dos Santos, as well as by unfolding events. The ebb and flow of the government's struggle with UNITA will be an important factor. Recent UNITA gains probably figure importantly in the tougher line Luanda recently has taken on Namibia-related issues. Most notably, dos Santos and other top officials have insisted publicly that no withdrawal of Cubans can occur until a settlement in Namibia is achieved and have linked such a settlement to South Africa's agreement to withdraw its forces from Angola and halt aid to UNITA. This hardening of Luanda's position, in our view, reflects mounting concern among all factions over the growing insurgent threat and their prospects if UNITA were to seize control. []

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As long as dos Santos continues to move cautiously, he probably can survive. Dos Santos's hardline opponents in the regime probably will allow him to continue negotiations with the United States and with South Africa because they believe these efforts at least buy time for the government. They also may believe that the United States might offer diplomatic recognition or economic aid, or that international pressure might eventually force Washington to drop its insistence on linking a Cuban withdrawal to independence for Namibia. Nonetheless, it is unlikely, in our judgment, that the President can move decisively away from current policy directions in the near term because of the paralyzing divisions within the ruling party. []

Possible Outcomes

Despite the probability, in our view, that the three-way standoff between dos Santos and the factions will persist over the near term and will continue to work against any significant alteration of existing policies, the power equation in Luanda could change dramatically and with little warning. In the order of likelihood that we see, such a change could come about through three eventualities: a palace coup against dos Santos engineered by the hardliners with the assistance of Moscow and Havana; a voluntary decision by dos Santos to step down; or the takeover of the government by the black nationalists, possibly through exploitation of a popular uprising. []

We believe that dos Santos probably is afraid to move against top mulattoes such as Lucio Lara precisely because he feels such a move would spark a coup by the hardliners. We also believe that the hardliners might try to seize power if they believed that dos Santos was preparing to accept a Cuban troop withdrawal or enter reconciliation talks with Savimbi—policy initiatives that would threaten the mulattoes' position in Luanda. []

We assume the hardliners already have plans for a palace coup that they could quickly implement in an "emergency." We also expect that Cuban forces in the Luanda area would be involved in such a coup and that former Defense Minister Iko Carreira would

figure in it. His influence over the Angolan military probably would be crucial in keeping the armed forces on the sidelines or aligned with the hardliners. []

The ouster of dos Santos by the hardliners and his replacement by one of their own would add a new degree of inflexibility into decisionmaking in key areas of concern to the United States. Soviet and Cuban influence in Luanda would be strengthened, and Angola's interest in reaching an accommodation with either Savimbi or the South Africans would be sharply reduced. []

Although we currently have no hard evidence to suggest that dos Santos is considering stepping down voluntarily, there has been periodic reporting from diplomatic sources to indicate that the President has not been entirely comfortable in his position. Consequently, if he remains unable to get his way on key policy questions and conditions throughout the country continue to deteriorate, his personal frustrations could grow to the point where he might be willing to leave office with minimal pressure. A relatively peaceful and quiet departure by dos Santos could result in a constitutional succession in which another compromise candidate would be chosen by the MPLA's Central Committee. Another dos Santos-like president, however, would not end the factional paralysis in Luanda, and we would expect that Angola would continue to be unable to reverse deteriorating economic and security conditions. []

The black nationalists could gain control in Luanda by exploiting a revolt by military units in the capital area or a large-scale popular uprising by disgruntled black ghetto dwellers in Luanda. We have no evidence that such explosions are imminent, but there is plenty of loose tinder around that could fuel them. Popular resentment toward the Soviet and Cuban presence and to mulatto control is longstanding and widespread. Food shortages, deteriorating living conditions, and spreading official corruption have nourished disillusionment with the regime. Black

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nationalist leaders would have little difficulty in channeling public anger toward the mulattoes and their Soviet and Cuban backers, and, while the struggle might be bloody and drawn out, the nationalists could, with luck, end up on top. There are policy divisions within the nationalist faction itself—as there are among the hardliners—and the emergence of a new leadership in this manner might not result in any immediate moderation of policies in Luanda. Over time, however, we would expect some policy departures in directions more favorable to the West, particularly on the UNITA question.

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